DR.
STRANGE
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THE MOST SHOCKING STORY OF ALL!
DOCTOR STRANGE
TM
DEMONS OF DENAK! EVERYONE'S BEEN TURNED INTO SKELETONS!!
--AND THEY'RE ALL COMING TO DESTROY ME!
YOU MUST READ THE UNBELIEVABLE
SORCERER NO MORE!

Once he was a man like most *others* — a *worldly* man, seduced and jaded by *material* things. But then he discovered the *separate* reality, where *sorcery* and *men's souls* shaped the forces that shape our *lives*. In that instant, he was *born again*, to become a man like *no* other—a man who left us *behind*, as he strove to stand against the unseen subtle perils hovering *thick* and *black* around our fragile existence...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

LO, THE POWERS CHANGETH!

SOMEWHEN ...

THERE HE IS, MY MASTERS,! *OBLIVIOUS* TO THE TRAPS WE HAVE SET FOR HIM.

UNAWARE THAT SOON, IN SOME FAR-FLUNG CORNER OF THE COSMOS, DOCTOR STRANGE WILL *DIE* ...

...AND *XANDER* WILL BE HIS EXECUTIONER,!

MARV WOLFMAN
WRITER/EDITOR
ALFREDO P. ALCALA
GUEST ARTIST/LETTERER
MICHELE WOLFMAN
COLORIST

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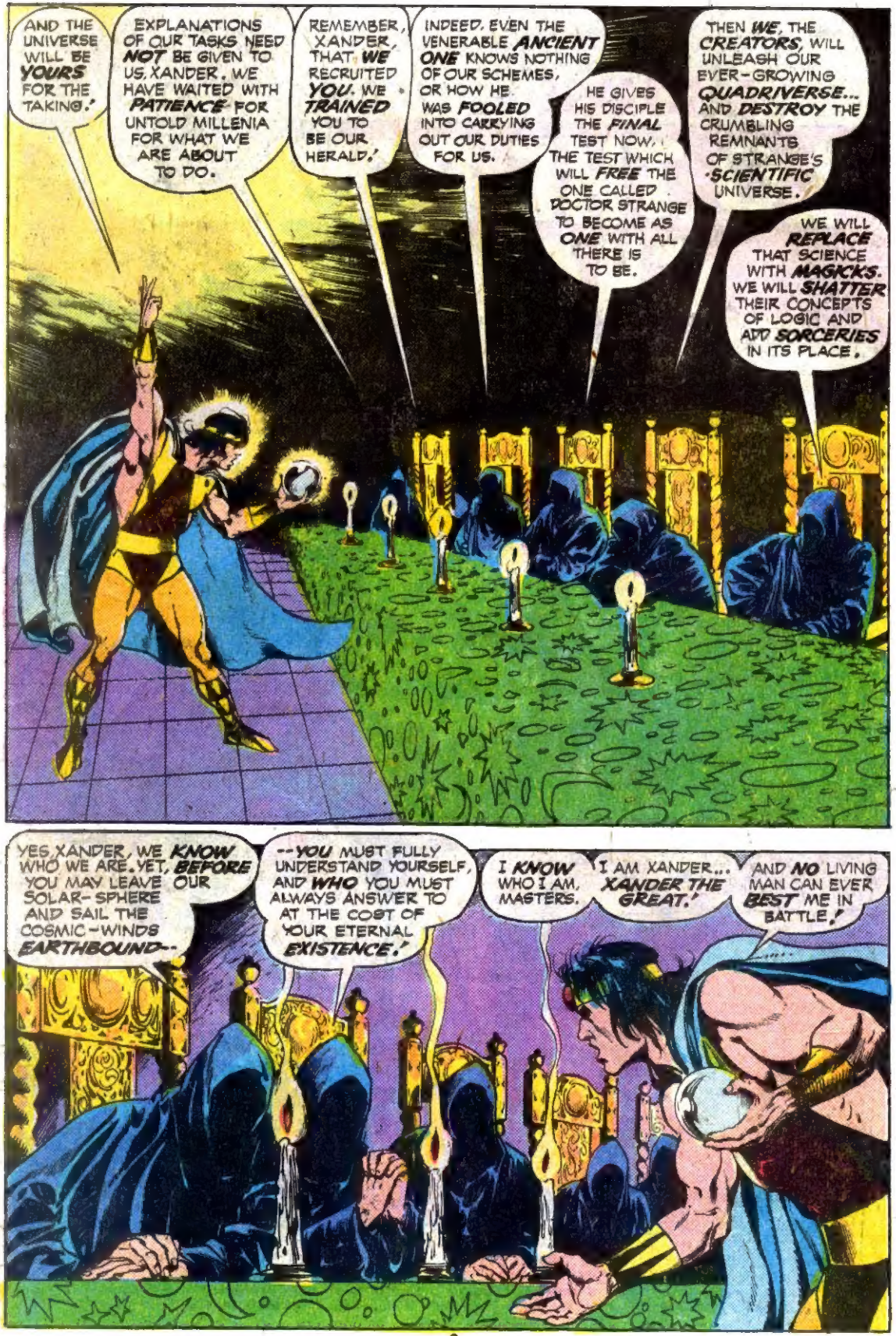

AND THE UNIVERSE WILL BE YOURS FOR THE TAKING.'
EXPLANATIONS OF OUR TASKS NEED NOT BE GIVEN TO US, XANDER. WE HAVE WAITED WITH PATIENCE FOR UNTOLD MILLENIA FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO DO.
REMEMBER, XANDER, THAT WE RECRUITED YOU. WE TRAINED YOU TO BE OUR HERALD.'
INDEED, EVEN THE VENERABLE ANCIENT ONE KNOWS NOTHING OF OUR SCHEMES, OR HOW HE WAS FOOLED INTO CARRYING OUT OUR DUTIES FOR US.
HE GIVES HIS DISCIPLE THE FINAL TEST NOW, THE TEST WHICH WILL FREE THE ONE CALLED DOCTOR STRANGE TO BECOME AS ONE WITH ALL THERE IS TO BE.
THEN WE, THE CREATORS, WILL UNLEASH OUR EVER-GROWING QUADRIVERSE... AND DESTROY THE CRUMBLING REMNANTS OF STRANGE'S SCIENTIFIC UNIVERSE.
WE WILL REPLACE THAT SCIENCE WITH MAGICKS. WE WILL SHATTER THEIR CONCEPTS OF LOGIC AND ADD SORCERIES IN ITS PLACE.
YES, XANDER, WE KNOW WHO WE ARE. YET, BEFORE YOU MAY LEAVE OUR SOLAR-SPHERE AND SAIL THE COSMIC-WINDS EARTHBOUND--
--YOU MUST FULLY UNDERSTAND YOURSELF, AND WHO YOU MUST ALWAYS ANSWER TO AT THE COST OF YOUR ETERNAL EXISTENCE.'
I KNOW WHO I AM, MASTERS.
I AM XANDER... XANDER THE GREAT.'
AND NO LIVING MAN CAN EVER BEST ME IN BATTLE.!

HAVE I NOT BEEN TRAINED BY YOU MASTER CREATORS, THE SUPREME SEERS OF THE QUADRIVERSE ITSELF?
AM I NOT KNOWLEDGABLE OF EVERY METHOD OF COMBAT THERE IS?
AM I NOT XANDER THE UNDEFEATED!
AYE, I AM A WARRIOR WHO BATTLES NOT ONLY WITH PHYSICAL STRENGTH, BUT WITH THE SIXTEEN SORCERIES OF THE CREATORS THEMSELVES!
OBSERVE HOW WELL I HAVE LEARNED YOUR LESSONS," STRANGE STANDS BEFORE ME NOW."
HIS FLESH CRAWLS AS I ADVANCE ON HIM. HIS MIND REELS IN AGONY AS I SHINE THE STAR-STONE UPON HIM.
AND, AS I CALL UPON BROMAGDON'S RUBY RAIN--
--HE FALLS BACK IN HORROR, FOR HIS FLESH WITHERS ON ITS BONE,
AND BURNS INTO THE DEEPEST RECESSES OF HIS MIND.
AND SO HE IS GONE, ASHES HEAPED UPON THE MOTTLED REMAINS OF A ONCE SORCERER SUPREME.
WHILE XANDER STANDS IN TRIUMPH!
AND, AS I HAVE DONE WITH HIS BIO-DROID, SO WILL I DO WITH THE TRUE DOCTOR STRANGE.
IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY, IF THE MYSTIC MASTER DARES INTERFERE WITH YOUR TIME-TESTED PLANS--
--XANDER WILL DEFEAT STRANGE... AND DESTROY HIM-- FOREVER!
COME THROUGH THE STAR-STONE NOW, PASS BY THE WORLDS WITHIN THE QUADRIVERSE. COME TO EARTH, BUT NOT THE EARTH OF OUR TIME, NOR THE EARTH OF XANDER'S PHASE. NO-- TO A TIME NEAR PAST, TO PHILADELPHIA, IN 1775...
AND COME TO SEE A CERTAIN DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE, DEEP IN TROUBLED THOUGHT...
CLEA AND BENJAMIN FRANKLIN-- THE MERE THOUGHT OF THEM TOGETHER IRRITATES ME NO END.

THEIR ACTIONS MAKE THEM SEEM CLOSE... ALMOST LOVERS AS IT WERE.
I KNOW I HAVE BEEN DISTANT WITH CLEA OF LATE--CAN I TRULY BLAME HER FOR SEEKING AFFECTION ELSEWHERE?
NO! I MUSTN'T OCCUPY MY THOUGHTS WITH SUCH INSANITIES!
LOOK, FRIEND--A FLYING MAN!
CURSE ME FOR A NOVICE! I'VE LET THOSE COLONIALS SEE ME.
IMAGES OF IKONN! I NEED ILLUSION TO COVER MY FLIGHT!
EH?
THAT IS NO MAN, DANIEL, BUT AN EAGLE!
IT IS, YET, I THOUGHT I SAW--NO! IT CAN NOT BE.
IT MUST BE THE SUN. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN IT. THE SUN!
THE ILLUSION FADES, BUT THE REALITY DOES NOT. CLEA AND BEN FRANKLIN WERE HOLDING HANDS, A COMMON ENOUGH ACTION...
BUT, THE LOOK UPON THEIR EYES, THE WARMTH I FELT GENERATING BETWEEN THEM.
IT DOESN'T TAKE A MYSTIC MASTER TO REALIZE MY DISCIPLE FELT LOVE FOR THAT MAN.
BUT I MUST BE SURE!
LET THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO WASH THE TRUTH CLEAN BEFORE ME.
LET THE FACTS REVEAL THEMSELVES!
IT IS TRUE!
THE TWO ARE IN LOVE!
BUT--IT IS A LOVE I WILL NOT ALLOW!
BY THE DREAD DORMAMMU, I WILL NOT PERMIT SUCH AN AFFRONTERY TO TAKE PLACE!

NO! WHAT CAN I HAVE BEEN THINKING!
I'M NO LOVESICK FOOL. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE SORCERER SUPREME!
BUT, TRUTH-FULLY...
...I-I AM SIMPLY A MAN, COMPLETE WITH HUMAN FRAILTIES SUCH AS RAGE AND JEALOUSY!
AND, I AM A MAN CAUGHT WITHIN FORCES THAT ARE AT TIMES BEYOND HUMAN UNDER-STANDING!
I MUST BE ALONE WITH MY THOUGHTS. PROBE MY LIMITATIONS. TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME.
AND MORE, TO FREE MYSELF FROM THE NAGGING DOUBTS THAT SOMEHOW I AM BEING MANIPULATED
I'VE FELT THIS WAY SINCE THE WORLD WAS DESTROYED AND I REMAINED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT OF ALL THE BEINGS TO LIVE UPON THIS EARTH--
--ONLY I AM A TRUE HUMAN WHILE ALL OTHERS WERE MERELY RECREATIONS!
BUT THE MANIPULATION GOES EVEN DEEPER. WHY MY SUDDEN INTEREST IN LEARNING THE OCCULT HISTORY OF AMERICA?
WHY WAS I ATTACKED TWICE BY THE WIZARD STYGYRO--BOTH TIMES WITH MENACES I WAS EASILY ABLE TO DEFEAT?
TOO MANY SUCH EVENTS HAVE OCCURED TO ME LATELY WHICH MAKE NO RATIONAL SENSE...
...SAVE THAT IT ALL BEGAN AFTER CLEA BECAME MY DISCIPLE... AND AFTER MUCH OF HER TUTORING HAD BEEN COMPLETED!
THE ANSWERS LIE WITH HER, AND THEY ARE ANSWERS I AM BEGINNING TO FEAR!
THEREFORE I MUST GO TO HER AGAIN, AND, BY THE UNSPEAKABLE UMAR, I MUST BE ON MY GUARD AGAINST THE WOMAN I HAVE OFTEN CALLED MY LOVE.

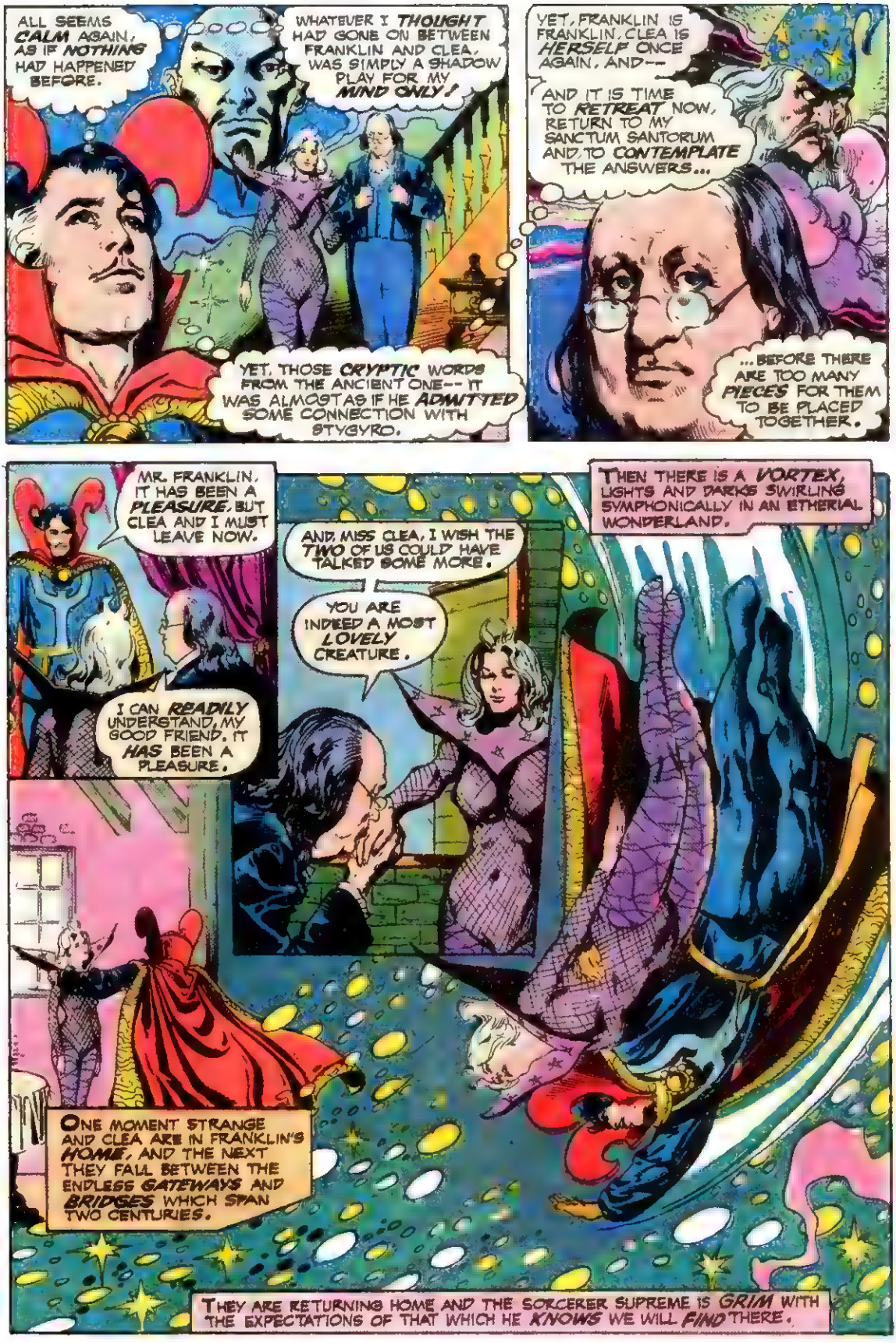
THERE IS ONLY A MOMENT'S HESITATION BEFORE THE FORM OF DOCTOR STRANGE FADES FROM VIEW ONLY TO RE-APPEAR ELSEWHERE...
EH? CLEA, MY DEAR, COME HERE AT ONCE!
I BELIEVE YOUR FRIEND SEEKS YOU.
STEPHEN--?
YES, CLEA. I'VE COME FOR YOU, TO TAKE YOU FROM THIS HOUSE.
WE MUST RETURN TO OUR TIME NOW.
NO, DR. STRANGE. CLEA HAS DECIDED TO STAY WITH ME IN MY TIME.
WE ARE ENGAGED, GOOD FRIEND.
CLEA--?
I--IT'S TRUE, STEPHEN. BEN FRANKLIN AND I ARE TO BE MARRIED!
BY THE CRIMSON BANDS OF CYTTORAK--NO!
THIS IS MADNESS--INSANITY!
I WON'T ALLOW IT!
STAND BACK, CLEA. I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING! WHAT I MUST DO!
STEPHEN! YOU'LL KILL HIM! DON'T!
YOU CAN'T KILL WHAT NEVER EXISTED, CLEA.
BUT--! WE TALKED, WE LOVE. WE...
YOU ONLY THOUGHT YOU DID, CLEA. I REALIZED HE COULD NOT BE FRANKLIN. NOT HERE AND NOW.
TODAY, MAY FIFTH, 1775, FRANKLIN WAS CHOSEN AS A MEMBER OF THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS--
--WHICH MEANS HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN HERE WITH YOU.
AM I NOT CORRECT, STYGYRO?
AYE, STRANGE, THOU HAST PERCEIVED THE TRUTH AT LAST!
WHAT THOU HAST BELIEVED TO BE AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY HUMAN, IS IN TRUTH--
--STYGYRO...PRINCE OF SORCERERS!

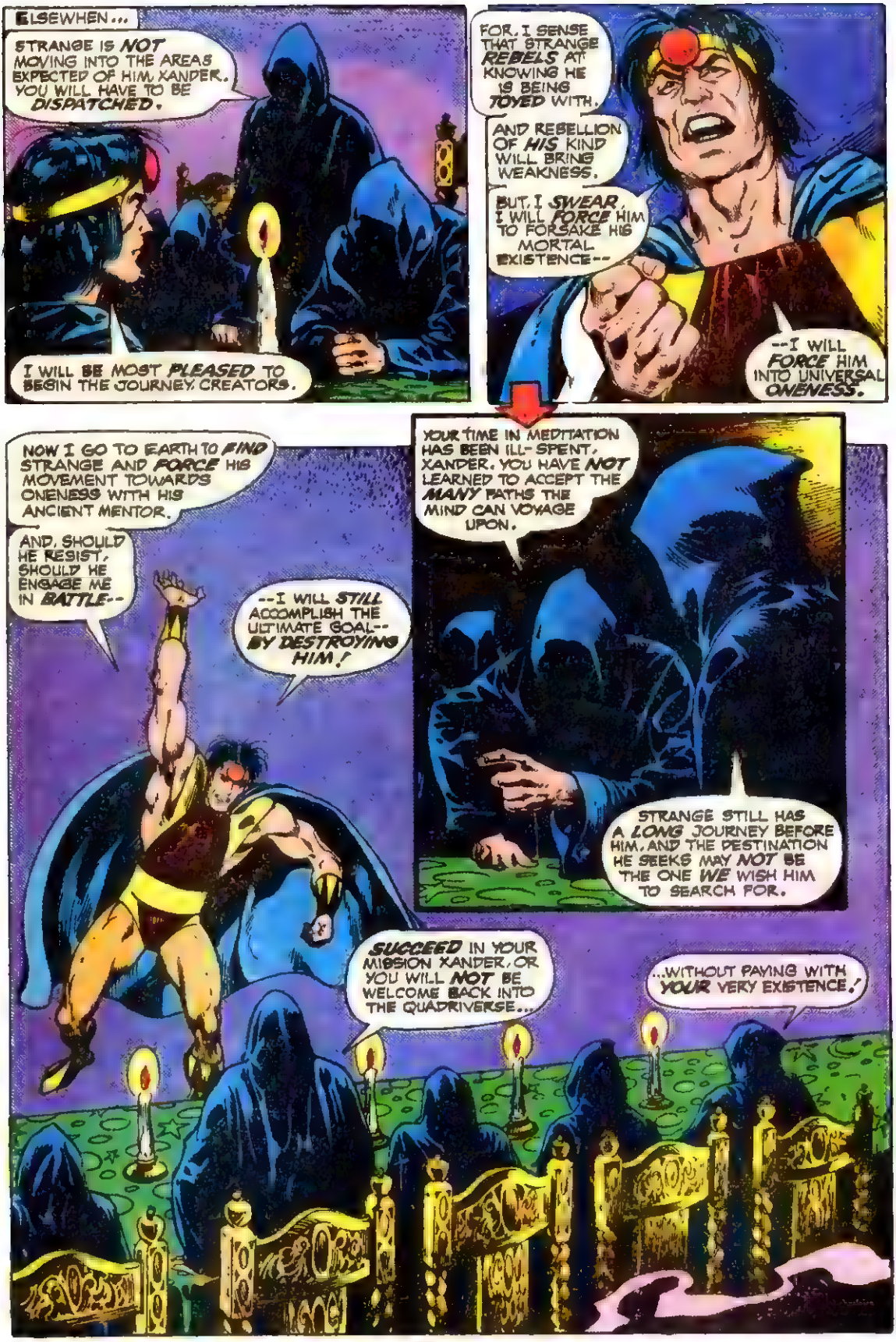
AND, THOU HAST PERCEIVED YET A SECOND TRUTH. THOU ART PLAYING THE ROLE OF PUPPET DANGLING HELPLESS ON A STRING.
BUT, THOU SHALT NOT LEARN THE REASONS WHY FROM STYGYRO...
...AND THE TIME THOU ART CONFUSED GIVES ME ENOUGH TIME TO CREATE FURTHER MADNESS IN THY MIND.
BEAR WITNESS ONCE AGAIN TO THIS, WORLDS END!
OBSERVE! AN EARTH-IMAGE CREATED FROM MUD AND CLAY, GIVEN SHAPE AND SUBSTANCE IN THE GUISE THIS WORLD EARTH.
I CRUSH YON IMAGE, AND THROUGH MAGICKS EVEN THOU HAST NO KNOWLEDGE OF--
--THE TRUE WORLD CRUMBLES BENEATH YOUR FEET!
STEPHEN! FRANKLIN'S HUT IS SHAKING...
STAND HERE, CLEA, WHILE I INVESTIGATE!
THOUGH ALREADY I KNOW WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED!
DEMONS OF DEMAK! A MASSIVE QUAKE, RIPPING THE LAND IN HALF!
YET, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY MENTION OF THIS EARTH-QUAKE IN HISTORY BOOKS.
WHICH MEANS THIS IS YET ANOTHER TEST--AN IMAGE-PLAY FOR MY EYES ONLY!
VERY GOOD SORCERER, BUT THOU ART INCORRECT!
WHAT THOU DOST BEAR WITNESS TO, DOES INDEED OCCUR!
NO, WIZARD. I'VE WATCHED THE WORLD BORN, AND I'VE SEEN IT DIE BEFORE.
YOU WON'T DESTROY IT A SECOND TIME.
FLAMES OF FALTINE! I WON'T ALLOW IT!
A PETTY EFFORT FAR BENEATH YOUR SKILL, STRANGE!
STEPHEN!
YOUR WORLD IS DESTROYED, STRANGE! AND THOU ART HELPLESS IN PREVENTING ITS FINAL FADING!
FARE THEE WELL, MAGICIAN. I GO NOW, AND TAKE YOUR WOMAN WITH ME!

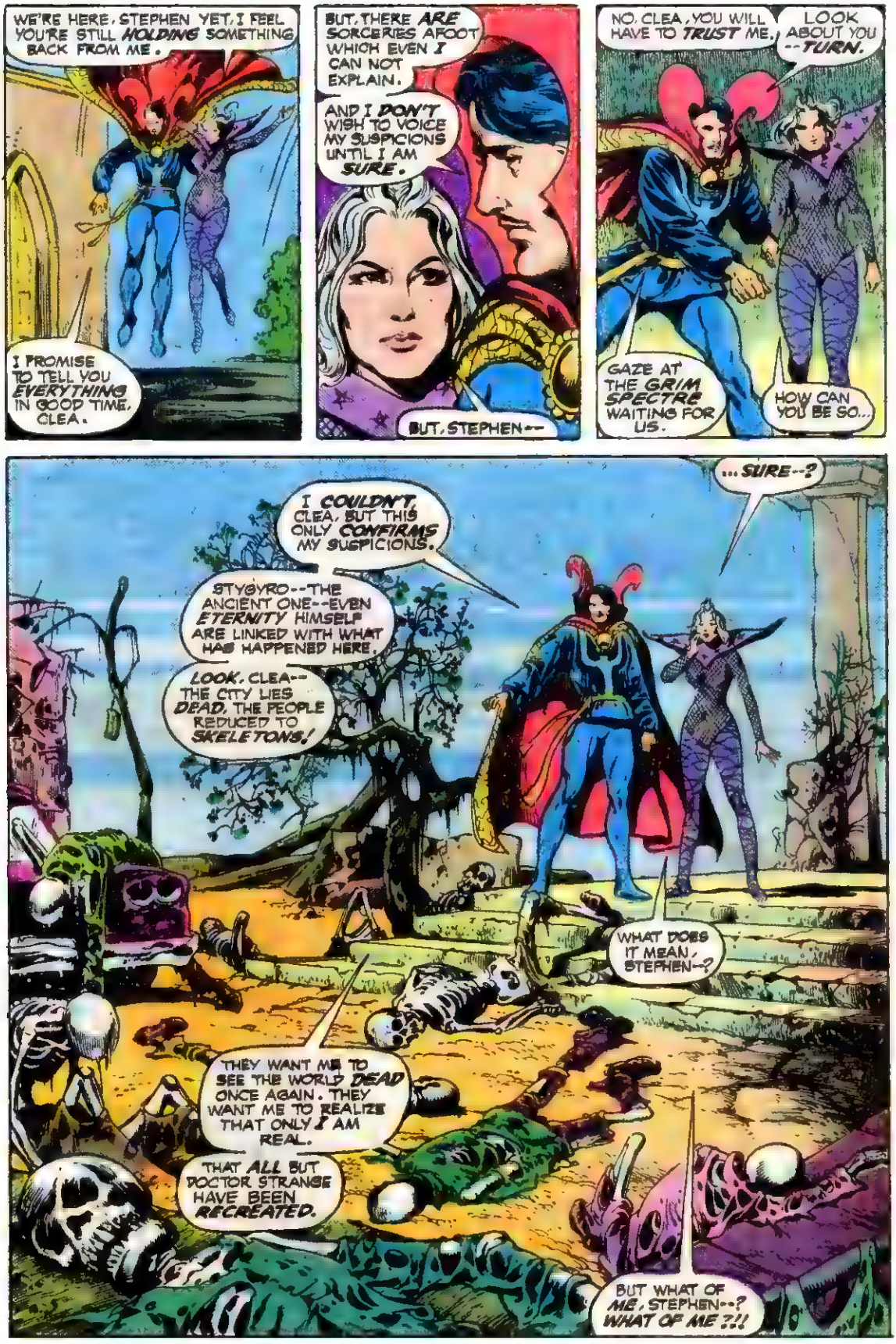
STYGYRO VANISHES, CLEA ALONG WITH HIM, AND THEN THERE IS NOTHING SAVE THE AGONIZING RUMBLING OF STONE AND MUD GRINDING OVER A CRUMBLING WORLD.
THERE IS NOTHING SAVE THE FRANTIC SCREAMING ECHOING WITHIN STRANGE'S HEAD... PITIFUL PLEAS FOR HELP FROM A DYING HUMANITY WATCHING THEIR DEATHS OCCUR BEFORE THEIR VERY OWN EYES!
DOCTOR STRANGE SEES THIS ALL, AND TURNS AWAY. FOR THE SORCERER SUPREME MUST CRY.
HIS ABILITIES MAY BE SUPER HUMAN, BUT STEPHEN STRANGE IS SADLY, ALL TOO HUMAN.
AND THIS MASSIVE TRAGEDY OF WASTED LIVES RIPS HIS HEART ASUNDER.
BUT STILL HE FORCES CALMNESS TO HOLD HIS MIND IN CHECK.
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO SAVE THE PEOPLE... AND THE RISKS ARE SOLELY MY OWN.
YET, THE DANGERS THAT AWAIT ME ARE NOTHING COMPARED WITH THE TORTURE THOSE THOUSANDS MUST FEEL.
STRANGE RISES AND ASSUMES THE LOTUS POSITION. HIS EYES CLOSE TO THE HORROR THAT GOES ON BEFORE HIM. HIS MIND BECOMES FREE FROM THE PAIN HE FEELS SURGING BELOW. STRANGE REACHES DEEP WITHIN HIMSELF.
HE PULLS HIS THOUGHTS TOGETHER. HE STEELS EVERY FIBRE OF HIS BODY FOR ONE SUDDEN ACTION!
AND SUDDENLY-- TIME CEASES!
AND THE WORLD FREEZES IN THE MID-MOMENT!

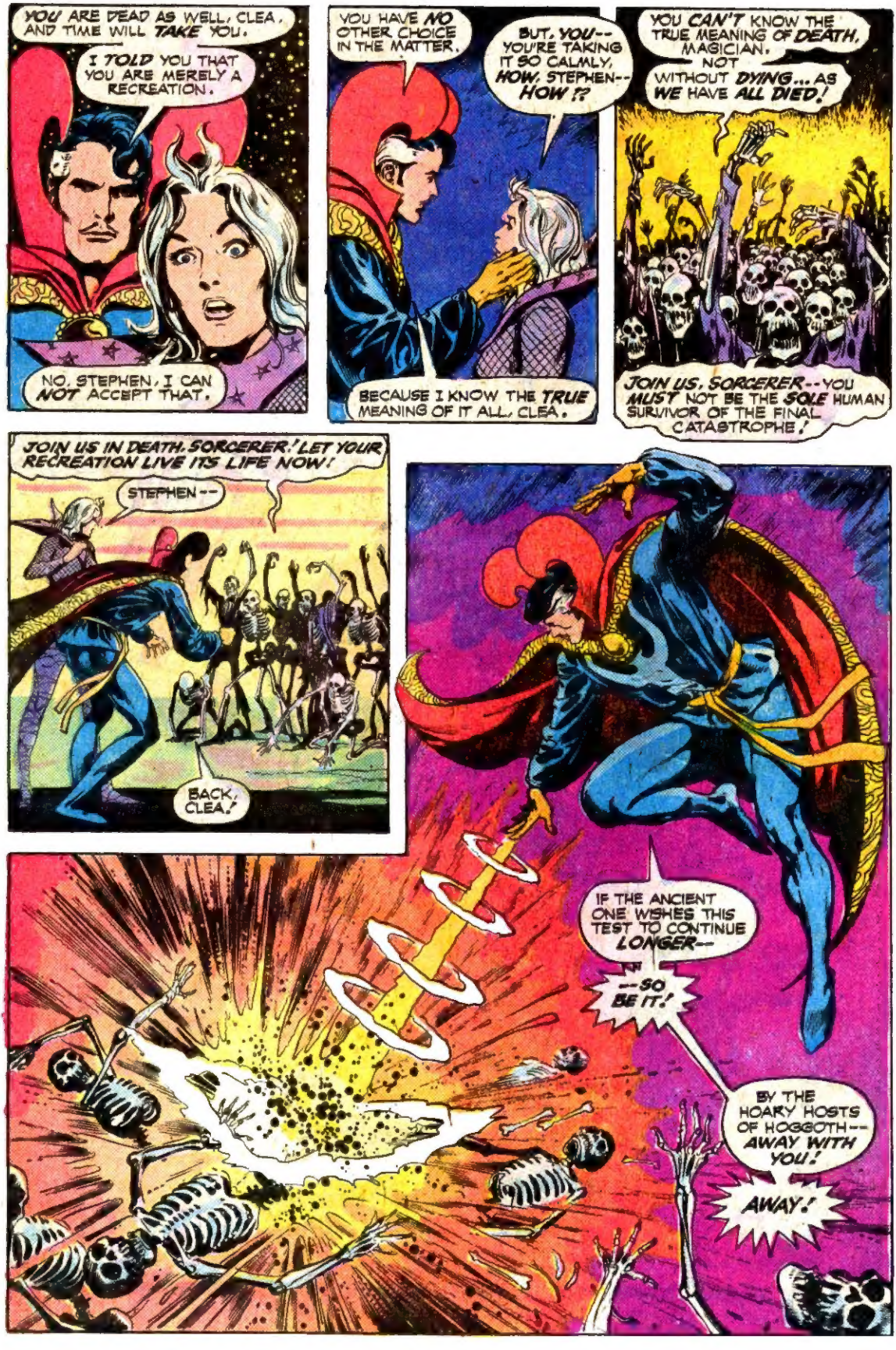
STRANGE'S BONES SEEM TO SHATTER WITHIN HIM. HIS MIND REELS, AND HIS FLESH WEAKENS.
PAIN. HE CAN STAND IT NO LONGER, YET, HE CONTINUES TO ACCEPT THE WAVES OF TORTURE WHICH FLOOD OVER HIM. HE FUNNELS THE PAIN THROUGH HIS BODY. EASES ITS STRENGTH, DIFFUSES ITS IMPACT.
HE CONTINUES TO PRESS HIS WILL EVEN AS HE IS TORN APART. THE SECONDS CRAWLS IN REVERSE. THE BODIES HURLED INTO THE EARTH, RISE FROM IT NOW.
THE GROUND CLOSES AGAIN. THE BUILDINGS REFORM.
ALL IS AS IT WAS JUST MOMENTS BEFORE.
ALL BUT DOCTOR STRANGE. HE IS NOT THE SAME.
HIS ASTRAL SELF PEELS AWAY THE COATING OF PAIN AND LEAVES THE HOST BODY TO REST UNHAMPERED. HE RISES, SEEKING RELIEF, AND HE SEES CLEA.
...STILL FROZEN IN TIME, UNMOVING, UNSEEING.
AND SHE RESEMBLES AN ANGEL OF SORTS.
STRANGE BACKS AWAY, SMILING-- STRANGELY.
HE UNDERSTANDS NOW.
IT HAS BEEN A TEST. NO OTHER EXPLANATIONS WILL DO.
AND, THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE ENTITY WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO TEST ME.

I MUST LOOK TOWARDS THE STARS FOR MY MENTOR-- THE ANCIENT ONE!
HE FORSOOK THE CRUMBLING FRAILTIES OF HUMANITY TO BECOME ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE.
VENERABLE ONE. YOUR DISCIPLE SEEKS YOU OUT.
I HAVE QUESTIONS TO WHICH ONLY YOU CAN SUPPLY THE ANSWERS.
MY SON. ONCE YOU STUDIED AT MY FEET, YOU LEARNED WHAT I COULD TEACH YOU.
NOW YOU SEEK FURTHER KNOWLEDGE.
THERE ARE LIMITATIONS TO WHAT YOU MAY KNOW, MY SON.
YOU HAVE PARTLY DISCERNED THE TRUTH. YOU HAVE LEARNED OF THE TEST. BUT...
...THAT IS ALL YOU HAVE LEARNED.
WHY ANOTHER TEST, VENERABLE ONE? I HAVE BECOME SORCERER SUPREME!
WHEN YOU HAVE LEARNED WHY, YOU WILL HAVE PASSED THE TEST, MY SON.
I CAN SAY NOTHING MORE.
ALREADY I HAVE SAID TOO MUCH.
GONE! HE'S RETURNED TO THE STARS!
AND I'VE LEARNED NOTHING MORE THAN WHAT I HAD ALREADY PERCEIVED.
IT IS BEST THEN TO RETURN TO MY HOST FORM, AND TO FRANKLIN'S COTTAGE.
AND LEARN IF THE TRUTH WILL BECOME MORE APPARENT LATER.
STEPHEN! YOU'VE BEEN GONE SO LONG.
BEN AND I WERE WORRIED FOR YOU.
INDEED WE WERE, SON. BUT YOU'VE RETURNED IN TIME FOR DINNER.
LET US REJOICE WITH CELEBRATION MY RISING TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.


ALL SEEMS CALM AGAIN, AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED BEFORE.
WHATEVER I THOUGHT HAD GONE ON BETWEEN FRANKLIN AND CLEA, WAS SIMPLY A SHADOW PLAY FOR MY MIND ONLY!
YET, THOSE CRYPTIC WORDS FROM THE ANCIENT ONE-- IT WAS ALMOST AS IF HE ADMITTED SOME CONNECTION WITH STYGYRO.
YET, FRANKLIN IS FRANKLIN, CLEA IS HERSELF ONCE AGAIN, AND--
AND IT IS TIME TO RETREAT NOW, RETURN TO MY SANCTUM SANTORUM AND TO CONTEMPLATE THE ANSWERS...
...BEFORE THERE ARE TOO MANY PIECES FOR THEM TO BE PLACED TOGETHER.
MR. FRANKLIN, IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE, BUT CLEA AND I MUST LEAVE NOW.
I CAN READILY UNDERSTAND, MY GOOD FRIEND. IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE.
AND, MISS CLEA, I WISH THE TWO OF US COULD HAVE TALKED SOME MORE.
YOU ARE INDEED A MOST LOVELY CREATURE.
THEN THERE IS A VORTEX, LIGHTS AND DARKS SWIRLING SYMPHONICALLY IN AN ETHERIAL WONDERLAND.
ONE MOMENT STRANGE AND CLEA ARE IN FRANKLIN'S HOME, AND THE NEXT THEY FALL BETWEEN THE ENDLESS GATEWAYS AND BRIDGES WHICH SPAN TWO CENTURIES.
THEY ARE RETURNING HOME AND THE SORCERER SUPREME IS GRIM WITH THE EXPECTATIONS OF THAT WHICH HE KNOWS WE WILL FIND THERE.


ELSEWHEN...
STRANGE IS NOT MOVING INTO THE AREAS EXPECTED OF HIM, XANDER. YOU WILL HAVE TO BE DISPATCHED.
I WILL BE MOST PLEASED TO BEGIN THE JOURNEY, CREATORS.
FOR, I SENSE THAT STRANGE REBELS AT KNOWING HE IS BEING TOYED WITH.
AND REBELLION OF HIS KIND WILL BRING WEAKNESS.
BUT, I SWEAR, I WILL FORCE HIM TO FORSAKE HIS MORTAL EXISTENCE--
--I WILL FORCE HIM INTO UNIVERSAL ONENESS.
YOUR TIME IN MEDITATION HAS BEEN ILL-SPENT, XANDER. YOU HAVE NOT LEARNED TO ACCEPT THE MANY PATHS THE MIND CAN VOYAGE UPON.
STRANGE STILL HAS A LONG JOURNEY BEFORE HIM. AND THE DESTINATION HE SEEKS MAY NOT BE THE ONE WE WISH HIM TO SEARCH FOR.
NOW I GO TO EARTH TO FIND STRANGE AND FORCE HIS MOVEMENT TOWARDS ONENESS WITH HIS ANCIENT MENTOR.
AND, SHOULD HE RESIST, SHOULD HE ENGAGE ME IN BATTLE--
--I WILL STILL ACCOMPLISH THE ULTIMATE GOAL-- BY DESTROYING HIM!
SUCCEED IN YOUR MISSION XANDER, OR YOU WILL NOT BE WELCOME BACK INTO THE QUADRIVERSE...
...WITHOUT PAYING WITH YOUR VERY EXISTENCE!


WE'RE HERE, STEPHEN. YET, I FEEL YOU'RE STILL HOLDING SOMETHING BACK FROM ME.
I PROMISE TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING IN GOOD TIME, CLEA.
BUT, THERE ARE SORCERIES AFOOT WHICH EVEN I CAN NOT EXPLAIN.
AND I DON'T WISH TO VOICE MY SUSPICIONS UNTIL I AM SURE.
BUT, STEPHEN--
NO, CLEA, YOU WILL HAVE TO TRUST ME.
LOOK ABOUT YOU --TURN.
GAZE AT THE GRIM SPECTRE WAITING FOR US.
HOW CAN YOU BE SO...
I COULDN'T, CLEA, BUT THIS ONLY CONFIRMS MY SUSPICIONS.
... SURE--?
STYGYRO--THE ANCIENT ONE--EVEN ETERNITY HIMSELF ARE LINKED WITH WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE.
LOOK, CLEA-- THE CITY LIES DEAD, THE PEOPLE REDUCED TO SKELETONS!
WHAT DOES IT MEAN, STEPHEN--?
THEY WANT ME TO SEE THE WORLD DEAD ONCE AGAIN. THEY WANT ME TO REALIZE THAT ONLY I AM REAL.
THAT ALL BUT DOCTOR STRANGE HAVE BEEN RECREATED.
BUT WHAT OF ME, STEPHEN--? WHAT OF ME ?!!

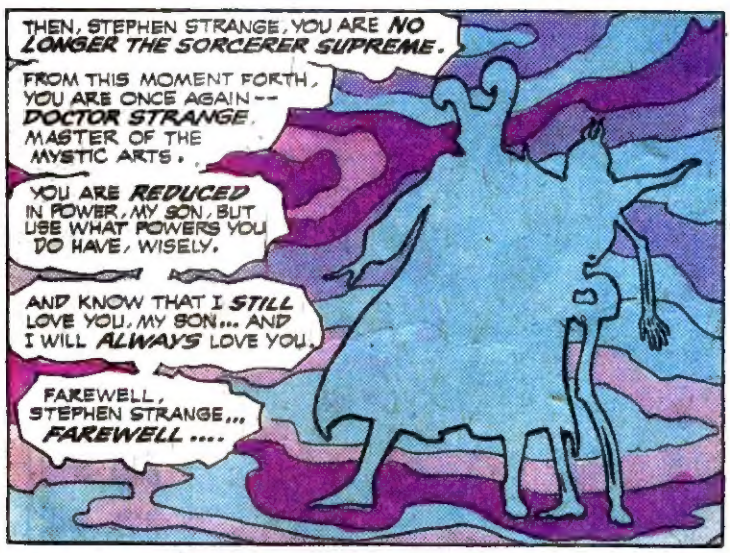

YOU ARE DEAD AS WELL, CLEA, AND TIME WILL TAKE YOU.
I TOLD YOU THAT YOU ARE MERELY A RECREATION.
NO, STEPHEN, I CAN NOT ACCEPT THAT.
YOU HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE IN THE MATTER.
BUT, YOU-- YOU'RE TAKING IT SO CALMLY, HOW, STEPHEN-- HOW!?
BECAUSE I KNOW THE TRUE MEANING OF IT ALL, CLEA.
YOU CAN'T KNOW THE TRUE MEANING OF DEATH, MAGICIAN. NOT WITHOUT DYING... AS WE HAVE ALL DIED!
JOIN US, SORCERER--YOU MUST NOT BE THE SOLE HUMAN SURVIVOR OF THE FINAL CATASTROPHE!
JOIN US IN DEATH, SORCERER! LET YOUR RECREATION LIVE ITS LIFE NOW!
STEPHEN--
BACK, CLEA!
IF THE ANCIENT ONE WISHES THIS TEST TO CONTINUE LONGER--
--SO BE IT!
BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH--AWAY WITH YOU!
AWAY!

DEMONS OF DENAK! THEY PRESS ON!
EITHER THE ANCIENT ONE DOES WANT ME DEAD--OR HE WISHES ME TO COMPLETELY PROVE MYSELF!
SHIELDS OF SERAPHIM--I WILL!
IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI--
--RETURN TO THE EARTH AND MUD WHICH SPAWNED YOU!
BE GONE!
THEY'RE GONE, STEPHEN. YOU'VE DESTROYED THEM ALL.
FOR THE MOMENT, THE ANCIENT ONE HAS YET TO--
--APPEAR...?
WHAT--
IN THE NAME OF THE UNSPEAKABLE UMAR--
--NO!
YOU TOLD ME I WOULD DIE, STEPHEN. AND NOW I HAVE!
DO YOU STILL WANT ME NOW? I CAN STILL BE YOURS IF YOU DO!

I HAVE MY POWERS. I CAN STILL BE YOUR DISCIPLE.
THAT IS ENOUGH, CLEA.
VENERATED ONE--
--END THE FINAL TESTING NOW.
THERE IS NO FURTHER NEED FOR IT.
MY ANSWER TO YOUR UNSPOKEN QUESTION IS NO!
I'VE SEEN THE WORLD DIE TWICE, MASTER. I'VE SEEN STYGYRO CREATE CHAOS. I'VE LIVED THROUGH THOSE ILLUSIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE RENDERED OTHER MEN INSANE!
MY SON, THERE CAN BE NO OTHER ACCEPTABLE ANSWER BUT ACCEPTANCE.
I OFFER YOU TO JOIN ME IN THE STARS, TO RISE ABOVE THE FLESH AND TO BECOME A SPIRIT IN THE UNIVERSE.
I OFFER YOU COMPLETENESS!
YET NOW, I UNDERSTAND WHY SUCH HAS BEEN DONE TO ME, AND I REJECT ITS REASONS.
I OFFER YOU THE ONENESS THAT BEING THE SORCERER SUPREME MUST LEAD TO.
YOU LIVED THROUGH HORROR AFTER HORROR. YOU WERE SHOWN A WORLD DESTROYED THEN POPULATED WITH RECREATIONS.
THEN YOU WATCHED AS THOSE RECREATIONS WERE ALSO DESTROYED!
YOU'VE SEEN THE PAST, AND YOU'VE SEEN THE GREAT BECOME EVIL. YOU'VE FOUGHT THE EVIL, AND YOU'VE WON!
YOU MUST NOW ACCEPT THE FINALITY OF LIFE, THE COMPLETE ADVANCING OF THE SPIRIT.
I REJECT IT, MASTER.

I AM STILL SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS. I CAN'T RAISE MYSELF ABOVE ASKING QUESTIONS.
I'M STILL YOUNG. MY LIFE AND LOVES ARE STILL BEFORE ME.
WHAT YOU HAVE DONE IS THE ONLY ANSWER FOR YOU, VENERATED ONE, BUT NOT FOR ME.

BY REJECTING THE FINALITY, YOU HAVE REJECTED BEING SORCERER SUPREME.
I MUST REMOVE YOU FROM THE RANK AND FORM. I MUST REMOVE THOSE POWERS FROM YOU.
DECIDE NOW, MY SON. ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT IS YOUR WISH?
I AM SURE, OH MASTER.


THEN, STEPHEN STRANGE, YOU ARE NO LONGER THE SORCERER SUPREME.
FROM THIS MOMENT FORTH, YOU ARE ONCE AGAIN -- DOCTOR STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS.
YOU ARE REDUCED IN POWER, MY SON, BUT USE WHAT POWERS YOU DO HAVE, WISELY.
AND KNOW THAT I STILL LOVE YOU, MY SON... AND I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.
FAREWELL, STEPHEN STRANGE... FAREWELL....

NEXT ISSUE: XANDER STRIKES BE HERE FOR A MAGICAL MYSTICAL TOUR!